

Information about the Cifre for foreign candidates

I) Presentation

For over thirty years, the Cifre scheme (Cifre = Conventions Industrielles de Formation par la Recherche – industrial research training agreements) has been subsidising French companies that employ doctoral students and directly involve them in research partnerships with state laboratories. The research culminates in a thesis after three years.

Cifre are fully financed by the French Ministry of Higher Education, Research and Innovation, which entrusts ANRT with implementing the program.

The principle

The main objective is to foster the development of public-private partnership research and place doctoral students in an employment situation. This involves an association between four parties:

The company that recruits a Master's graduate on a temporary or permanent contract (Articles D. 1242-3 & 6 of the French Labour Code) and entrusts him or her with a research project that is strategic for its socio-economic development. The gross annual starting salary must not be under € 23,484. The work becomes the subject of the employee-doctoral student's thesis.

The academic research laboratory that supervises the employee-doctoral student's work, and the student is enrolled at the doctoral school attached to the laboratory.

- [Decree of 25 May 2016 establishing the national training framework and the procedure for delivering a French national doctorate diploma](#) (French text)

The doctoral student devotes 100% of his or her time which is shared between the company, and the academic laboratory, to research work. He or she benefits from dual academic-professional training.

ANRT draws up a research training agreement (Cifre) with the company based on which it receives a subsidy. The annual subsidy amounts to € 14,000 (not subject to VAT).

In addition, the company could get a tax research credit (TRC), calculated on the non-subsidised share of the total costs, of an annual amount of at least € 10,595.

The company and the laboratory, within a maximum six months from the start of the Cifre, draw up a research partnership contract that sets out the conditions of the partnership, including the research method, location where the doctoral student will work, confidentiality and intellectual property issues, etc.

An annual report, signed by the company, the laboratory and the doctoral student, is handed in to ANRT at the end of the first and second years of study. A third report is requested at the end of the Cifre, that is electronically and separately sent to the doctoral student, research laboratory and company supervisors.

Grant conditions

The company must come under French law.

The candidate must hold a Master's degree or equivalent. The Cifre scheme is open to all nationalities. This should be the candidate's first doctoral research experience. Cifre applications must be made at least 9 months after both the candidate's hire date by the structure or the date of his or her first doctoral enrolment (mandatory time limit).

The recognised academic research laboratory must be located at a university, school or public research organisation.

Examination of applications

Applications are examined throughout the year. Decisions are generally communicated in the two months following the deposit of a **complete** application.

The Evaluation and Follow-up Committee decides on Cifre applications based on the following two expert appraisals:

- A socio-economic appraisal carried out by the regional delegate for research and technology (DRRT) in the company's region, which considers the company's financial health, its effective involvement, and its capacity to provide the candidate with "**professionalising**" training.
- A scientific appraisal that judges whether the pertinence of the partnership corresponds to the doctoral training programme.

Acceptance criteria

- Correspond to the general corporate strategy: the suggested subject must fit in with the company's development project.
- Provide effective corporate training: at the end of the convention, the doctoral student must be able to demonstrate genuine professional research experience.
- Propose a subject open to the business world: at the end of the doctoral training, doctors must be able to highlight their methodological and scientific achievements.
- Hand in a complete application: the experts making the scientific and socio-economic appraisals must be able to find in the application the elements they need to form their opinion, i.e. documents presenting the company, candidate's full CV, developed research subject (cf. section on "Preparing your Cifre"), presentation of the research team in terms of supervision, results and technical and scientific resources.
- Any request for additional information delays the examination and lengthens the process.
- **Caution: none of the data transmitted to ANRT should be of a confidential nature.**

The scientific expert's opinion is sought regarding:

- The interest and scientific quality of the research subject and its technical-economic interest.
- The company's commitment to the candidate and to the research project.
- Whether the company's activity corresponds and is relevant to the research project.
- Whether the candidate's education corresponds and is relevant to the research project.
- Whether the laboratory is competent to supervise the expected research.
- Its openness to partnerships with companies.

II) Foreign candidates

Cifre program requests the candidate to work full time on its research project.

Please refer to the recommendations of the competent authorities:

- for candidates, not yet in France: the French consular authorities in the country of residence;
- for doctoral candidates already in France: the OFII, the prefecture, or the DIRECCTE (links below).

Useful links:

- OFII – French Office of Immigration and Integration: <http://www.ofii.fr>
- DIRECCTE –Regional Directorate for Enterprises, Competition Policy, Consumer Affairs, Labour and Employment: <http://www.direccte.gouv.fr/>
- Campus-France: <http://www.campusfrance.org/fr/>

Note: For co-supervised doctorates, ANRT strongly recommends starting the thesis with a stay in France in order to fulfil recruitment and work permit conditions.

III) Co-supervised thesis

Research is necessarily international. All researchers are part of an international scientific community and publish for a global readership. During their thesis work, doctoral students progressively integrate their scientific community and learn to participate in it.

On the Cifre scheme, by alternating work periods with a team of researchers in the academic sphere and periods with another team of professionals in the business world, doctoral students acquire a dual view that also makes them particularly employable. Like all other doctoral students, they join the international scientific community.

However, the co-supervision brings a new dimension to both the doctoral student and the Cifre partners, i.e. the company and the laboratory.

AN ASSET FOR DOCTORAL STUDENTS

Co-supervision means that a doctoral student is also a student at a foreign higher education and research institution, and thus a member of a foreign laboratory benefiting from another thesis supervisor.

On the Cifre scheme, doctoral students work on a rotating basis between their company and their two research laboratories. This necessarily broadens their learning in terms of knowledge and culture. Clearly, a doctoral graduated who is not only at ease in both academic and business circles, but has solid experience working abroad, constitutes a high potential for a company.

AN ASSET FOR COMPANIES

For companies too, research and development need to connect to the global situation to remain internationally competitive.

Taking on a doctoral student who will explore or confirm a partnership with a foreign institution not only satisfies the simple requirement of accessing a scientific competence, it can also contribute to penetrating a market.

Doctoral students will receive on-going academic support and mentoring support, because the partnership is co-supervised by a French partner research laboratory. The result is an international team working on a research project.

A partnership contract establishes intellectual property conditions between the three partners: company, French laboratory and foreign laboratory.

AN ASSET FOR LABORATORIES

The international dimension of academic research laboratories is an increasingly important component for teams and has an impact on their evaluation.

Co-supervision is a good way to build mature collaborations with partners from foreign institutions in a stable framework. Doctoral students carry this collaboration through and help make it durable.

Doctoral students of all nationalities can apply.

For more information

- Read the decree dated 25 May 2016 [establishing the national training framework and the procedure for delivering a French national doctorate diploma \(articles 20 to 23 included\)](#).
- Get in touch with the international relations departments at French partner universities, schools and research bodies, which know how to contact their foreign peers.
- Send your questions to cifre@anrt.asso.fr